

COUNTY LINES NEWSLETTER

For Partners **May 24**



TARIAN



Hello and welcome to the fifth County Lines Newsletter for policing partners.

It's been a busy period since our last Newsletter incorporating a national County Lines Intensification Week in March, a collaborative two-day operation targeting the rail network, numerous CPD events and of course County Lines work that has become daily business across our region.

Over the past year our three forces have been supported by funding from the National County Lines Coordination Centre Surge Fund. This funding has been central to many of the successes we have seen, particularly when budgets are being squeezed across policing. There will be further Surge funding available for 2024/25 but the Surge pot has been reduced which makes it ever more vital that police and partners work together to recognise and mitigate the threat posed by County Lines.

Once again colleagues and partners across the region have been committed to working together with some excellent disruptions, seizures and court results. These 'Pursue' headlines tell only part of the story and during the period we have seen a huge amount of Protect, Prepare and Prevent activity that very much compliments this Pursue work. Further details of some of this work is highlighted below.

I mentioned in the last Newsletter that the very nature of County Lines means that it is dynamic and ever changing so we have to be live to that fact and ensure we have effective relationships and communication to be able to respond. Since Christmas we have seen the use of QR codes to advertise the availability of drugs in our region. Whilst not a new thing we have seen an increase in the use of QR codes and at the same time we are reminded that those involved see drug dealing as a business and will copy the practices of legitimate businesses to make money.

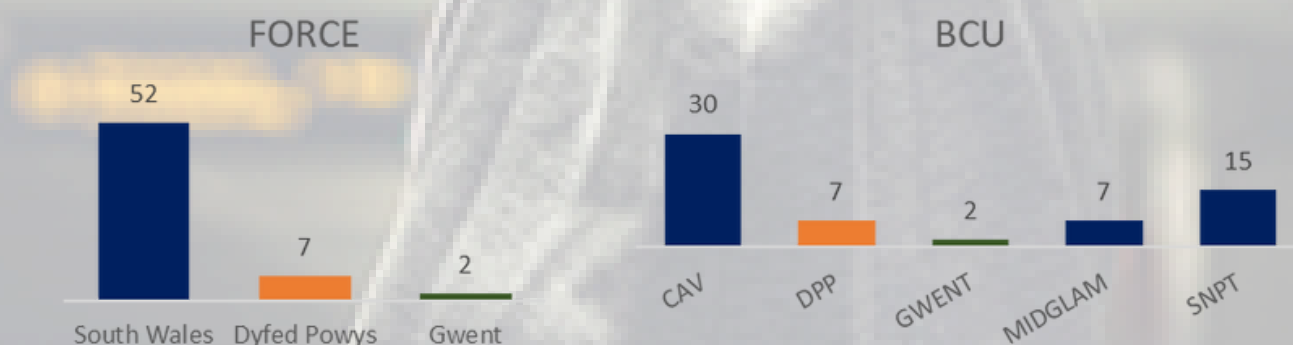
You will read below how the threat can change quickly and how work is needed across our communities to ensure southern Wales is hostile to those wanting to perpetrate the County Lines business model in our area.

Please continue to raise awareness about the threat within your agencies and take advantage of the CPD opportunities that can be found below.

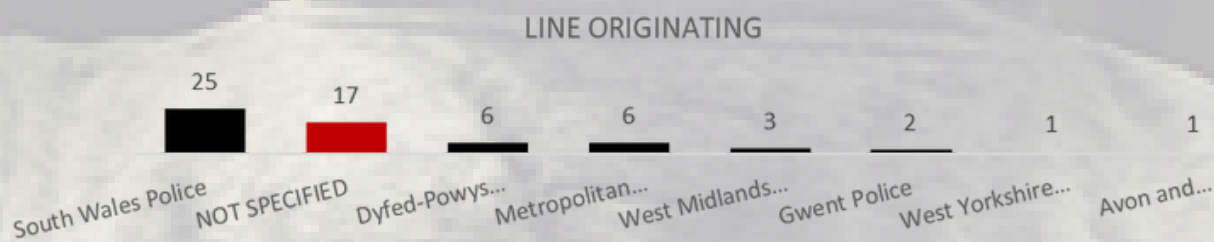
Detective Inspector Richard Weber
Tarian County Lines Tactical Coordinator

Dynamic Face of County Lines

We have seen an increase in the number of lines recorded in the southern Wales region in recent months. In April we recorded 61 lines up from 51 in January. The South Wales force area has recorded the highest number of lines with Cardiff and the Vale BCU recording 30 lines.



Swansea has seen an increase in lines recorded from the London area with Cardiff recording a number of lines from outside of Cardiff but with the majority being 'local lines.'

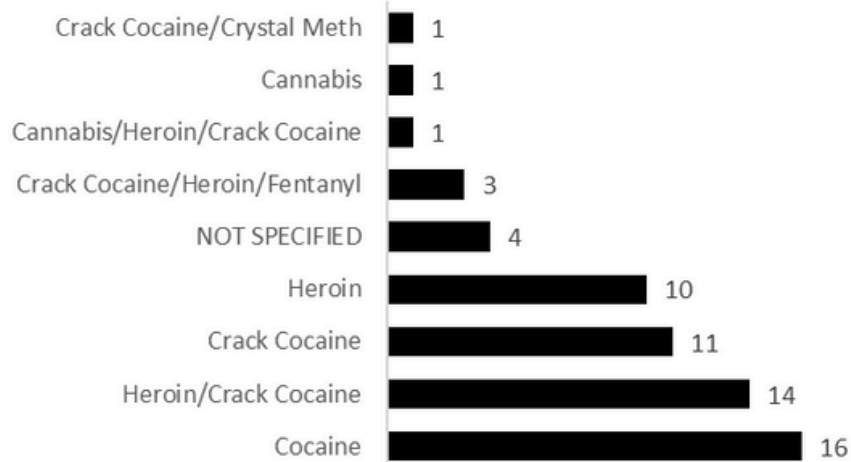


You can see from the above graphs that South Wales police is the most impacted force as might be expected but were you aware that most of our lines are 'local lines' using the County Lines methodology? We have local lines operating in suburbs of some of our cities and which never leave those areas. In some ways the title 'County Lines' has become unhelpful as there is no crossing of any County border. Nevertheless the threat risk and harm of these lines remains the same.

Traditionally County Lines have been associated with selling heroin and crack cocaine but more recently it has been recognised that whilst the drugs themselves pose a risk to the user, the biggest risk is to those being exploited through County Lines. The Home Office requires us to record all County Lines sending out bulk messages advertising drugs where there is an element of exploitation. It is this element of exploitation that differentiates a County Line from a 'normal' drugs line and whilst police will not ignore 'normal' drugs lines will prioritise lines that involve elements of exploitation.

For that reason we record as County Lines all drugs lines using exploitation as part of its methodology, whatever drug they are advertising though crack and heroin remain the most commonly recorded.

DRUG TYPE



A number of regions nationally have noted an increase in the use of QR codes to advertise drugs and this has been seen in our region too. Should you find drugs being advertised via QR codes please let police colleagues know.



Regional Activity

91 County Lines were closed down in our region between August 2023 and March 2024. That means that 91 drug line holders were charged with drug supply offences. In addition we seized 112 weapons, 26kg of cocaine, 18kg of heroin and nearly 2kg of crack as well as over a million pounds in cash. As importantly we worked with partners across the region to raise awareness around County Lines and to Prevent, Protect and Prepare our communities. The National County Lines Intensification week that was held in March provides evidence of these '3P' efforts in addition to the Pursue aspect.

The Infographic below provides detail of some of the headlines around the 3P work as well as the Pursue and includes the fact that 145 people were safeguarded during the week.



Over 400 engagement events were held across our region during the Intensification Week. Over 10,000 people were provided inputs on County Lines or were met at locations such as transport hubs, Universities, Housing Associations, Charities and provided information and leaflets to help raise awareness of the issue. A new Crimestoppers Zone was launched at the same time in the Bridgend area.

From Aberystwyth to Chepstow colleagues and partners worked tirelessly prepare our communities without giving nightmares.

It is this collaborative mindset that enables us to identify and safeguard the vulnerable and to target the perpetrators of County Lines recent highlights of which I include below.

CC Line Cardiff – a local line running the west of Cardiff was disrupted in April. Several kilos of heroin, £6,000, weapons and a hydraulic press were recovered. 4 males and a female were charged with drugs offences and in addition the two principal members of the group were charged with Modern Slavery offences relating to children they were using to run and sell the drugs for them.

Alfie Line Cardiff – organiser of the line was supplying others across south Wales and Gwent. Officers executed warrants recovering significant amounts of crack and over £30k.

David McCauley "MZ Line" - 40 months imprisonment

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/teenager-carrying-cash-heroin-crack-29027354>

SJ Line Bridgend – a male from Barry was identified as dealing in the Bridgend area and officers found crack deals and large amounts of cash when warrants were executed.

SJ Line Swansea – unrelated to the SJ Line above or previous SJ Lines in Swansea linked to London officers have charged and remanded two local males who were running this line and another line in the area using young males to run for them.

Operation Tilworth targeting County Lines in the Dyfed Powys area has seen the arrest and remand of a male found in possession of half a kilo of cocaine. The male was using the Telegram app to broadcast messages to his customers.

AK Line Newport – two local males arrested following the execution of a warrant at an address where concerns had been raised over possible cuckooing. Heroin, Cash, Designer Clothing & a £12,000 Electric Bike seized.



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Operation Ample – Collaborative Working across the rail network

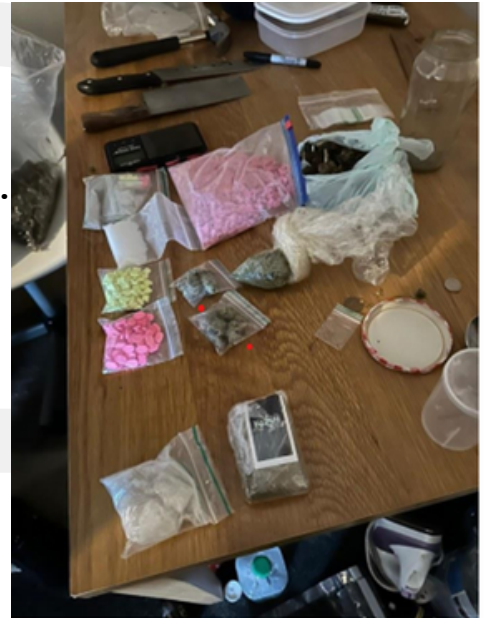
Operation Ample was a Multi-Agency deployment to South Wales on Wednesday 24th and Thursday 25th April 2024. This was a tri-service police deployment involving BTP, South Wales and Gwent Police forces, it also incorporated 4 local authorities and 3 Health commissioning boards and involved all 5 proactive CLTF teams, Passive drugs dogs, County Lines Development Unit and Operations Safeguarding lead.

Operational activity also focused on Paddington railway station, this being the direct rail from London to South Wales and Newport, Cardiff, Swansea and Bridgend.

16 arrests were made in total including males in possession of weapons, a male in possession of nearly £10k, a variety of different drugs and a phone suspected to be the deal line and another male on bail for drugs offences in the Devon area found in possession of drugs and cash.

Op Ample saw both Children's Social Care and Adult Services jointly deployed across four local authorities for the first time. What this meant is that any vulnerable child or adult who came to police attention was fast tracked into services as a direct alternative to a criminal justice response.

Welsh Government commented, "The collaborative partnership established to support children and young people is truly commendable". The impact was 15 direct referrals into drug and alcohol services, including the dispensing of 2 x Naloxone kits (opioid antagonist) and 1 x blood borne virus test. A homeless female was supported directly into accommodation and further assessment, and four young people were supported including local authority services liaising with the mother of a child who had gone missing and the arranging of an appropriate adult to attend custody.



Cardiff and Vale Drug and Alcohol Service Manager shared, "The briefing was so informative and the attitudes and compassion of all the officers involved was such a nice thing to see and be part of. I have worked in substance use services for over 20 years and something like this would never have happened previously," (Manager, Cardiff and Vale Drug and Alcohol Services).

Bringing partners together meant multiagency patrols gave the opportunity for professionals to learn from one another and thus strengthen responses overall.

Swansea Childrens Services - "My staff absolutely loved the day, they have taken so much from it and we are hoping to begin conversations to set something up locally in our area. We are already planning on speaking to PTB about the worries we have in our bus station currently too,"

The Welsh Government's Senior Modern Slavery and Worker's Rights Manager reflected, "The experience has also prompted reflection / conversations about responsibility as citizens if we witness something "that doesn't look right" (!) while on trains/stations and I've been encouraging friends and family to download the railway guardian app and be aware of their voice or responsibility to fellow passengers"

Together we can make a difference.

**Detective Inspector Richard Weber
Tarian County Lines Tactical Coordinator**

CPD Opportunities



FREE COUNTY LINES AWARENESS SESSIONS FOR PARTNERS

Detective Inspector Richard Weber, County Lines Coordinator for southern Wales, invites you to attend a free County Lines Awareness Session for partners in policing.

This hour-long, online session will provide attendees with a baseline understanding of the County Lines threat to our region, the signs and symptoms of County Lines activity, and an overview of how your organisation or service can help tackle exploitation in our communities.

The session is aimed at colleagues working in Education, Health, Social services, Housing, the 3rd Sector, and beyond. There will be an opportunity to ask questions and to request further inputs from DI Weber.

Dates are;

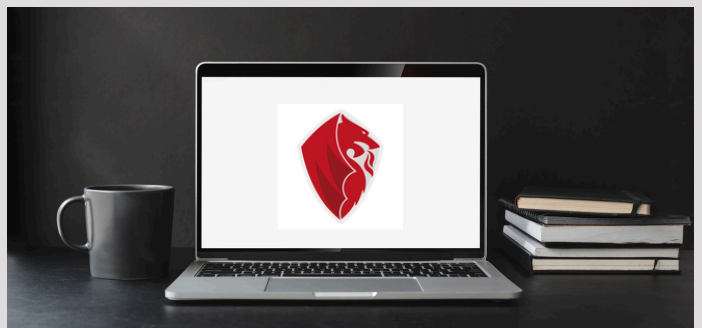
Wednesday the 12th of June – 11am

Thursday the 4th of July – 2pm

Friday the 13th of September – 10.30am

Monday the 7th of October – 12pm

Tuesday the 19th of November – 2pm



The link to the events is below with increased capacity being added.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/free-county-lines-awareness-session-for-policing-partners-tickets-906568680327>



Fearless.org have recently refreshed some of their resources for professionals. The packs cover:

Knife Crime

County Lines

Drugs & Alcohol

Child sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviour

The resource packs can be accessed via the website: Resources | Crimestoppers (crimestoppers-uk.org) <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/fearless/professionals/resources>

The Children's Society

The Children's Society have published their programme of learning, offering CPD inputs for a variety of subjects between May and September.

All sessions are free of charge, and delivered via Microsoft Teams Live:

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/thechildrenssocietypreventionprogramme>

Date	Session	Time
Thursday 23 May 2024	<u>Transitions to adulthood: preventing exploitation as children approach and turn 18</u>	10:00 - 12:00
Monday 3 June 2024	<u>Preventing and disrupting exploitation within the Night Time Economy</u>	13:00 - 15:00
Thursday 11 July 2024	<u>Disrupting exploitation</u>	10:00 - 12:00
Thursday 29 August 2024	<u>Safeguarding care experienced young people from exploitation</u>	13:00 - 15:00
Monday 16 September 2024	<u>Financial exploitation</u>	10:00 - 12:00

[Shattered Lives Stolen Futures Report - Full Report.pdf \(actionforchildren.org.uk\)](#)